

American Athletic Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Saturday, March 16, 2024

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Dickies Arena

Temple Owls

Adam Fisher

Hysier Miller

Shane Dezonie

Postgame Press Conference



hard to go execute, and these guys did it, and that's why I'm so proud of them. We were, I thought, elite communicators today.

On the defensive end, our activity was great and, again, our brand of perfect is playing together. We're not always doing the right stuff all the time. We mess up some assignments, but we do it hard, we do it together, and we communicate, and that's our brand of basketball.

Q. You said after the game that Coach Chaney was looking down on this team. Why has it been so important for you to connect the legacy of those past coaches, past legends, within that program to this current team?

ADAM FISHER: It's one of the winningest programs in all of college basketball. We have great facilities, we get great charter flights, all these amazing things because of all the great players that came before us. That's why we have a board in the Liacouras Center that we hit and all former players that come back they sign that board. That's special to us. It's not just something we talk about.

So we play for those guys that came before us. We know they have led Temple to places we want to go to. I think there's no better way to get to where you want to go than to hear from people that have done it and done it in that cherry and white.

Q. I won't say losing streak, but you had a difficult stretch obviously this season, had to deal with some off-the-court adversities as well. How were you able to weather to get to one game away from the NCAA tournament?

ADAM FISHER: It's simple for us. We try to stay locked in. We use the term loose and locked in. If you're at our shoot-around, we get after it, we're detail oriented, but we have fun. We got to enjoy the moment. Our focus is always on getting better. We don't really talk about winning and losing and this and that, and even at halftime today. If we do the right things we'll be happy. That's what we talk about, stay focused, get better with film, get better with whatever it is, and then you'll be enjoying the moment.

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THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started with an opening statement from Coach and then take questions for the student-athletes.

ADAM FISHER: Just so proud of this group. That was awesome. These guys have just stayed together. They believe in one another. Everybody has stepped up. It's been certain guys' nights, some guys have play more minutes, some less minutes, but everybody stayed together. I couldn't be more proud of a group of young men that have bought into something and just believe.

Also, I know it's going to come up, I know we had a 10-game losing streak. I'm well aware, but thank you. I'm sure somebody's going to bring it up. But, again, really happy for these young men. It's a players' program and they delivered tonight.

THE MODERATOR: Please raise your hand if you have a question.

Q. It seemed like in the second half, y'all were forcing them to play your brand of basketball that more kind of tough, gritty, low scoring, defensive style. What allowed you guys to do that and what was the conversation like at halftime?

ADAM FISHER: At halftime, again, our approach is the same. We've been in this situation. We were down eight and they got two free throws there at the end. That hurt, down eight. And it's about staying together. Hey, we're going to make some adjustments and we talked about those adjustments at halftime. It's easy to say it. It's really

ASAP sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

Q. Late in that game, Goldin, sometimes he was coming all the way up and bothering or he was protecting the rim. How did you measure -- tie game, he pulled up and hit, like, a 15-footer.

SHANE DEZONIE: Just having good spacing on the court, my teammates allowed me to just get that shot. Came off the ball screen. I think somebody in the corner had spaced out, so it gave me that lane to get a pullup, and I just knocked it down.

Q. You're stealing the ball crazy here. Are your spider senses up or your eyes? Where is that come from?

HYSIER MILLER: Trying to find ways to get my team the basketball, trying to find ways to get stops. If you can get a steal, we can get out in transition. I think that helps our team a lot. Trying to be in the passing lanes and find ways to get us extra possessions.

Q. Looking ahead to facing UAB, what do you make of that matchup and what's it going to take to beat 'em?

ADAM FISHER: I got to go watch more film tonight. We were so locked in on today. Obviously, we have just played them recently. It seems like a long time ago because of how many games we played in between. But we'll get together tonight, these guys will rest, and then we'll get ready tomorrow to give us the best game plan we think to go attack UAB. Really great team, great coach, really talented group we have to play against.

Q. You seemed to give Vlad Goldin some problems later in that game. Can you talk about what your change in approach to guarding him later in that game was?

ADAM FISHER: Yeah, I think we tried to be a little bit more physical inside, push out catches when we could. Then we tried to help. It's hard when you help because they have so many weapons. Coach May is an unbelievable coach. One of the best in the country. And we wanted to guard the three, that was a big emphasis for us, but also make sure inside we could help get back out.

So I think a great credit right? We had Ema guard him, we had Sam guard him, we had Ja guard him, we had Steve guard 'em. I think Dave guarded him for a possession. So it's March. Whatever it takes you got to do and these guys are doing it right now.

Q. Shane, take me through those trips to the line. You went multiple times down the final 1:30 of the game. What was going through your head when you were at

the line?

SHANE DEZONIE: Just knowing that these free throws really counted. They were big moments. I hit the first two and then got fouled again. The second two rimmed out. I wish they would have went in. But it was tough shots, but it was a good thing that we came back on defense and had a Hysier Miller got the stop.

ADAM FISHER: Also, the way you picked your head up, man, right? Missed one, you get back, you were in the gap, you're talking. Like, that's Temple tough, Shane. I'm proud of you, man. That was big-time.

Q. So in that final second, you're clinging to the ball, you're down on the court, you have a one-point lead. What's going through your head as that last second ticks off the clock?

HYSIER MILLER: Don't call a foul. Because sometimes when you dive on the ground and guys' feet, you roll up on somebody ankle, they can easily call a foul. So I was just hoping that there was no call there and once I had the ball, I wasn't letting it go.

Q. When Sam got his fourth foul, you went with Ema. You could have done different combinations there. What was the thinking?

ADAM FISHER: I think, obviously, Sam and Ja had four, and I thought Ema was giving us good minutes with his physicality. He was setting great screens, getting these guys open. So we wanted to keep those guys out of foul trouble so they could help finish the game, and Ema's minutes were huge. We're not in there at the end of the game if it's not for him. He was awesome. I thought even Quante Berry, when he came in the game, when Ja came in the game, all of 'em were huge contributors tonight.

Q. You played a fair amount of zone defense. That was in the plan. What were you trying to force there and what do you think you got?

ADAM FISHER: It's something that we talked a lot about going into the game. Obviously their size, their ability to make shots, and they flow into their offense so well. Their transition, make or miss, they fly it up the. So we wanted to try to change the pace a little bit. I thought that really helped. But it's these guys, their activity, their effort, they played so hard and then we rebounded. I think we only gave up two offensive rebounds, which was huge major point of emphasis for us so really proud of these guys.

Q. Take me through the halftime message. Another slow start offensively, guys really turned it on in the

early minutes there in the second half. Take me through that message to the guys at the halftime?

ADAM FISHER: To me the message was simple: I don't think we were playing great basketball. You go into the locker room and you're down eight, and we have been there all season, been down, so we were just talking about what do we need to do to clean up. That's why I love this group. We don't point fingers, we stick together and we communicate in the locker room. It's not yelling and screaming and this or that, it's, Hey, we need to do this. And then these guys talk, Hey, when they set this, this will help. I think when you have great leadership from your players, that's what you see on the court. Having those guys talking in the locker room amongst each other, regroup, was really big for us.

Q. Seems like this run might have started when you hit that shot at the buzzer last Sunday against UTSA. How hard was that shot?

HYSIER MILLER: That was five games ago. It was definitely a tough look. Huge credit to UTSA, hell of a team. He was playing great defense and was there every step of the way. I even had to double pump it a little bit. But it was a tough shot, credit to him. Good players got to make big plays, so...

Q. To your point, this is, you guys will have played five games in five days. How do you prepare on such a tight schedule film, scout, rest, how do you guys go about that?

HYSIER MILLER: Credit to Coach Fisher. Every preparation for the whole season has been the same, we've been consistent with everything we do. I'm sure nothing will change, we'll follow the same schedule that we've been following since, what was that, November, so I think we're going to do the same thing.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you.

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